AFRICANA RETROSPECT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

J. A. Fothergill

12/6

Mabel Alicia Keppel

from

J. R & Mrs Milne

July 2. 1895.

A Riding Retrospect

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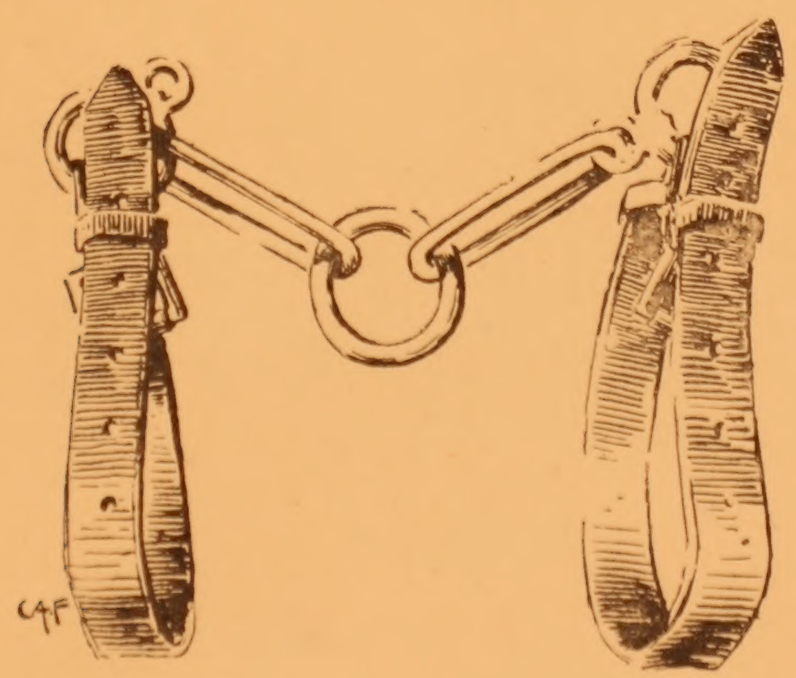
"HONOUR BRIGHT."

A RIDING RETROSPECT

BY

GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL

With Forty-three Illustrations by the Author



GEORGE WATERSTON & SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1895

To

My Father and Uncles

as well as to the respective Owners of "Clinker"

and the poor old "Dream," I gratefully

dedicate this little Retrospect

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ERRATUM.

Page 40, line 23, *read after* "Croppie Boy," "first whipper-in" *instead of* "huntsman."

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INTRODUCTORY.

My eye once caught sight of an original title to a book in Brown's well-known antique book shop at the corner of St Andrew Street, which, doubtless, to the reader will amply describe the contents of this pamphlet, viz. :—

"MISTURA CURIOSA;

BEING THE

HIGGLE-DI PIGGLE-DI OF," &c., &c.!

This curious mixture, in my case, is the result, no doubt, of an insufficient literary capacity for putting facts and thoughts together in a truly readable style. I trust, therefore, that the reader will overlook this deficiency and accept it as a mere "higgle-di piggle-di" retrospect.

Some three years ago I was the happy, and yet unhappy, owner of several hunters and a pony. Unhappy because I am since of opinion that no man should indulge in "the sport of kings" unless he takes "good thought for the morrow;" and this I did not do.

Hunting means the absorption of much valuable time, as well as expenses. My very short hunting experience, however, was a bright one in many respects; and, keeping my eyes and ears wide open, I claim to have laid by a store of interesting and useful information which otherwise would, aye, perhaps should never have been my lot to possess.

A word as to the Sketches which illustrate this little pamphlet. If they are appreciated, I can only say I have to thank my father, in the first place, for encouraging me to sketch when quite a small boy—the effective and rapid sketches he often made by my side in pencil

and water-colour were in themselves a sufficient stimulus; in the second place, my old drawing master at Uppingham School can lay claim to having drilled form, light, and shade into me, when he kept me at the cast for some four years—three hours a week constantly stumping at the classic. Beyond always taking a hint from an artist, when I could get it, I cannot say I ever had a lesson in landscape or animal drawing; but I did have the honour of being president of our small sketching club at school, so during the Easter term I divided my attention between outdoor sketching, training for hurdle races, and cross-country jumping; in all three of these I revelled.

My thanks are also due to several members of University Hall for many little suggestions thrown out with regard to the letterpress and arrangement of the drawings, as well as to Messrs George Waterston & Sons for the able way in which they have reproduced and incorporated the illustrations with the text.

"Blest childhood, hail! thee simply will I sing,
And from myself the artless picture bring;
These long-lost scenes to me the past restore,
And every place familiar to my sight
Recalls some fond idea of true delight."

Henry Kirke White.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS, WITH ADDITIONAL REMARKS.

AS children, my sisters and I used constantly to drive with our mother to the Meets of the North and South Warwickshire Foxhounds, and wait while we saw the hounds thrown off, and catch a parting glimpse of our father's red coat as it merged with the rest of the field into the distance. Stoneleigh Abbey and Cubbington-gate were favourite Meets.

I was always fond of horses; it was a taste inherited from my father, and he from his father. Well do I remember the days when we were taken by the nurse or governess up the Kenilworth Road from Leamington on the chance of meeting our father with his friends on their return from hunting; how I was swung up by that powerful arm and cantered off with to the stable. Here he would always wait until Bishop (our coachman) had gruelled his bonny chestnut, "Stratford," than whom "a better never bent him to the rein." He was my father's favourite hunter, and on several occasions he was known to leave the "field" and a locked gate well behind.

We would say "Good-night" to the "gees," and the next move was to the bathroom—that beautiful marble bath. And when I had tugged off his "buckskins" in the true professional style—not a bad item, by the by, for a five-year-older—and seen him fairly in the

water, it was my turn to go a-hunting; so, after donning the whole "bag o' tricks"—boots, spurs, coat and all—I would bestraddle the "crop" and "ride a cock-horse" all round the house, down into the kitchen—where the cook never missed a chance of embracing me—up into the nursery, much to my sisters' delight, not forgetting to take a look into the baby's crib, and everywhere until I was as tired as my father was fresh after his jolly bath, and ready for a good dinner and an after game of pyramids. What pleasant pyramid parties those were in the old days, when I can remember being perched upon a stool as "marker" for the guests. How keen my father was to teach me to keep the "gates" on the slate neat and accurate. How the deaf old Colonel P—— would amuse and irritate the party by pondering over the simplest "pot," as if he was preparing for one of those charges which made his regiment in India so famous. The stern-faced J. W. ——, D.D., pacing round the table with his heavy step; his earnest face and handsome features I can see now lit up occasionally with a smile and a kind word for me as I marked him down "two balls"; the good-natured lawyer, with his accurate eye-glasses and wonderful doubles into the middle pocket; and an uncle, H. F——, a constant visitor at Binswood, with his ready jokes and thoughtful presents for us children—all these and many more I can remember.

A PRESENT FOR THE NURSERY.

Gas out at 11.30 P.M., and my father would carry me up fast asleep to his dressing-room, and deposit me in a comfortable bed, where I would dream of nothing but boots and spurs and clashing of billiard balls.

Riding I always had, off and on, from a small boy upwards, but the practical aspect of hounds and "a good forty minutes" was not to be my lot until past the age of twenty-one. An odd day's cub-hunting, it is true, I did manage to put in before this, as well as many good runs on foot after the Cottesmere during my schooldays at Uppingham.

Most of my uncles were sportsmen, and I always cherished a longing for a burst myself. One uncle, H. F——, especially stirred up my youthful imagination with his hunting anecdotes and diaries, which he lent me to read. Seven hunters and a hack for the winter, and then six months' travelling abroad! What a delightful life he must have led, like many others who can afford it. What a treat to stay at his place in Kent and to go the round of his treasures, wandering through the house, looking first at one stuffed object and then at a lovely case of birds; here an elephant's skull and there the jaws of a shark or a young alligator, and skins in abundance; and hearing from his own lips how he came by each, what dangers he encountered, and so forth.

What is the outcome of such stimulus? Either a burst and a general collapse for ever, or a "fling" and a peaceful, or may be a bitter, future. By a burst I do not imply that it is necessary to launch out into a "horsey," betting, gambling, and drinking atmosphere. It is quite possible to avoid all this; but I do mean that, if possible, the thing should be done well; "go in for it strong," enter thoroughly into everything in connection with hunting. Attend a few horse sales, become a member of a pack of hounds—a provincial one to start with—hunt regularly two or three times a week at least, enter for the point-to-point races towards the end of the season, and then do a round of the various provincial steeplechases within easy reach, and if you have to ride in a race yourself, a visit to Aintree for the Grand National is well repaid, for there you will see some of the finest horsemanship in the world; and if you take a walk round the course previous to the race and measure the fences, noting height and depth, you will wonder how it is possible to cover these four

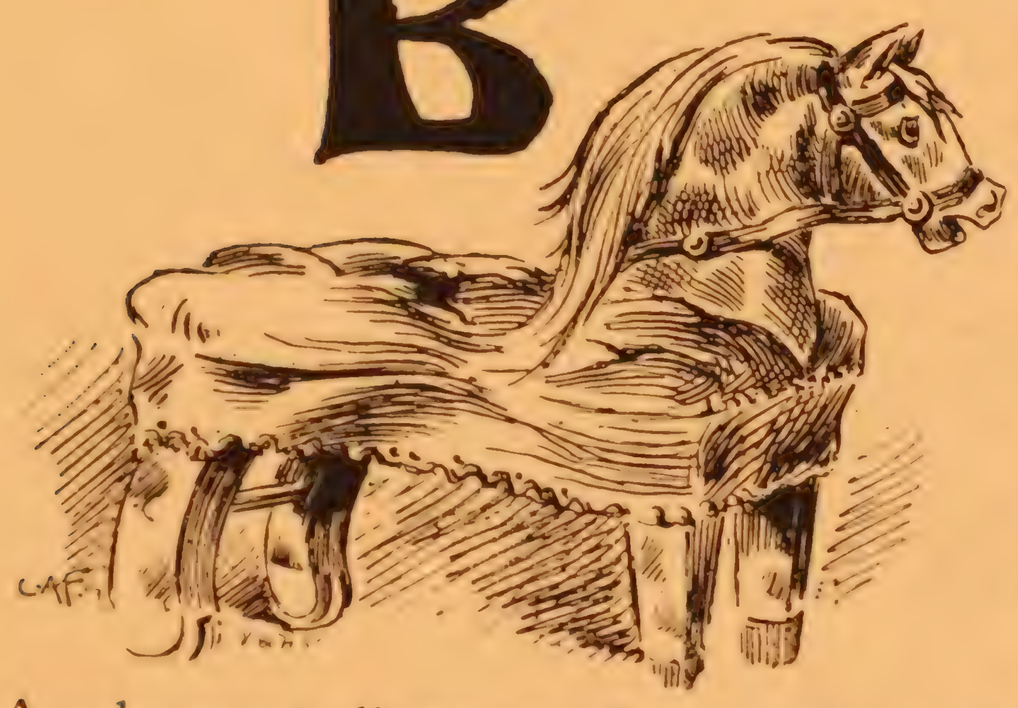
and a half miles at a speed of close on thirty-five miles an hour. Imagine, too, the pluck of a rider charging a hawthorn fence five feet high by four feet deep, with a small brook the near side, at such a lightning pace!

In the summer, after giving your animals a rest, you should try your hand at the Agricultural Show in the district and ride yourself. You know, or should know, your own beast's capabilities best.

This is what can be called a complete season, not to mention the Hunt balls and so forth which generally take place in all hunting neighbourhoods; and as to the Hunt ball itself—well, the sight of so many swallow-tailed red coats and brass buttons flitting about a ball-room is one which nobody who can see it should be content to miss.

CHAPTER II.

DRIVING AND RIDING TOURS.



BOTH driving and riding tours were favourite occupations of my father's, and on several of his later ones I had the pleasure of accompanying him.

My first experience was when only six years old, in the summer of 1874; and on this occasion we drove from Leamington to a small town opposite the Island of Anglesey, a distance of 155 miles, which we accomplished in five days.

Driving to Birmingham the first day (22 miles), we put up at the old "Hen and Chickens," a most gloomy hotel, but, according to my father's diary, free from "Norfolk Howards"—the old four-posters must have been grand harbours of refuge for these little pests.

Continued our drive next day to Wellington (35 miles), baiting two hours at Wolverhampton. The first stage through the "Black Country" was most dirty and dusty. Put up at the Wrekin Hotel, opposite which the Wrekin Hill was on fire, and had been for nearly a month—such a blaze of undergrowth with volumes of smoke rolling across the country.

On the third day we left for Oswestrey (28 miles), driving through Shrewsbury, and baited at Montfordbridge for four hours. The Winstay Arms was the inn we put up at. I remember well the interior of this nice old-fashioned place—a link of the old posting days.

After a Sunday's rest we "set sail" for Corwen, *viâ* Llangollen (37 miles), and reached Llanfairfechan (32 miles) the next day, after driving through the most beautiful country. Some of the towns we passed through, the hotels we stopped at, and many little incidents on the road are well fixed in my memory. I remember passing a band, and wished to possess a drum too; so at the next town my wish was complied with, and from that time forward I stood on the waggonette step and beat this miniature instrument of torture whenever we entered any village, much to the natives' surprise. I was a thirsty little morsel, and would often call in at a farm by the roadside for a drink of new milk, which I occasionally chanced to get just warm from the cows. I was allowed to "handle the ribbons" for a good many miles of this journey, but I objected to my father sitting beside me on the box seat. This was not making me half important enough, and so he would good-naturedly retire at intervals into the body of the carriage, where, you may be sure, he always kept a good lookout over his newspaper in case of accident.

In April 1885, my father and I set out on one of the pleasantest riding tours I have yet been—from Windermere to Kirkcudbright (220 miles) and back. It was an outing of ten days, but partly spoilt by heavy rain. Rain makes incessant riding on the roads very uncomfortable, as one's saddle lathers most horribly, and the splashing of mud is equal to that of a forty miles run with hounds in the worst of weather.

A few words may not be out of place as to the most convenient way of managing such an expedition. Well, we sent on a portmanteau full of changes by train to the town we hoped to reach in two days, taking with us only a nightshirt and tooth-brush each; these were wrapped in Mackintosh and fastened to the saddle where a huntsman carries his horn. We averaged daily some thirty-three miles, never

doing more than fifty-two miles in one day, and this exceptionally long stage was from Castle-Douglas to Carlisle, homeward bound. On reaching the main road between Carlisle and Gretna the journey northwards was rendered doubly interesting on recalling the romantic days and lively scenes of old. We pictured, as we rode along in the dusk of evening, a grandparent or parent in hot pursuit of some fair one carried off by a young gallant. The pictures of S. E. Waller stood out before me and greatly assisted the imagination.

CASTLE DOUGLAS.
THE DOUGLAS ARMS—

At Castle-Douglas we gave our horses a three days' rest owing to bad weather, and went by train to Ayr, where we spent two nights. We were thus only on the road seven days. If horses are in good condition before starting on a tour of this length, and respectably stabled and cared for at the inns, with plenty of corn, they should stand it quite well; but I can recommend half a bucket of warm water, with a handful of meal in it at eleven o'clock, and a rest of an hour and a half, with a feed of corn, about 1 P.M. Riding on the roads is different to hunting, when it is customary for an animal to do a big day on an empty stomach, comparatively speaking, with only a gruel between early morning and evening; but then the same mount

is not required the next day, which makes a great difference. My father rode 14 stone, and his mare is now in her eighteenth year, and equal to ten miles an hour yet; the strain upon her could not have been so great as some supposed at the time. The grooming is of the greatest importance. Instead of going into the inn at once and ordering your whisky and soda, etc., go and see yourself that your animal gets proper attention, well washed, and a good strapping down with a wisp of straw to finish off with.

A word of advice is, always see that your steed has had its corn in a foreign stable. Perhaps the world is a little more honest nowadays than it used to be in our grandfathers' time, but still I have always followed the principle my father worked upon. A tale he often tells is a sufficient lesson for travellers on horseback. His father once happened to be returning to the stable of an inn for something he had left in his carriage, when he saw a small girl quickly coming out of his horse's stall with a measure of corn in her hands. He looked into the manger and found it was bare, and so the poor horse had none; until the old gentleman collared the little rascal and made her return it all. This he found out to be a not infrequent economy on the part of the landlord, and no doubt many a poor animal had experienced a weary homeward pull from these quarters. So see that your beast has had its dinner before you have yours, and I'll warrant you will relish your beefsteak with a better appetite after so doing. Take a last look-in, too, before going to bed, and see if the sheets are warm enough and if he has plenty of bedding, and give his ears and shanks a rub down.

It is the careful attention to these important details that makes your mount last out a week or ten days' continuous journey.

I once went a horse and bicycle tour in 1890—a younger brother and myself—but never again on that particular route and under the same circumstances. Our journey happened to be through some of the roughest parts of Cumberland—from Grasmere to Gosforth the first day, *viâ* Ambleside, Wrynose Pass, and Ulpha over Birker Moor, from which can be obtained one of the finest prospects in the district. On the second day up Sty-head Pass; but here it was too

A CUMBERLAND DALE.

much of a good thing, I had to dismount and push my brother's machine upside down—wheelbarrow fashion—for two miles and a half up the stiffest pass in the Lake Country. He led the mare, who had great difficulty herself in scrambling up among the rocks and loose stones which lay over the narrow pack-way, crossed now and again by swollen streamlets. We did reach the top at last, and were rewarded by having to ride the remaining six and twenty miles, *viâ* Borrowdale and Keswick, in a thunderstorm. We got home at 11.30 P.M. Our arrival was quite unexpected owing to the inclemency of the weather, so "coachy" had gone to his bed, and the lot of groom fell to me—a task I would rather have had at any other time than midnight, after such a tedious journey. I never felt so inclined for "Bedfordshire" as I did that night.

Two years previous to this a Mr J——, his son and I travelled over part of the same ground, baiting at the Woolpack Inn on our way to Seascale, on the coast of Cumberland, where we stayed two nights and visited Calder Abbey—those grand old ruins, which no one in the district should miss paying a visit to. Returning home we crossed the three monosyllabic rivers, the Irt, Mite, and Esk, and rode over Hardknott and Wrynose.

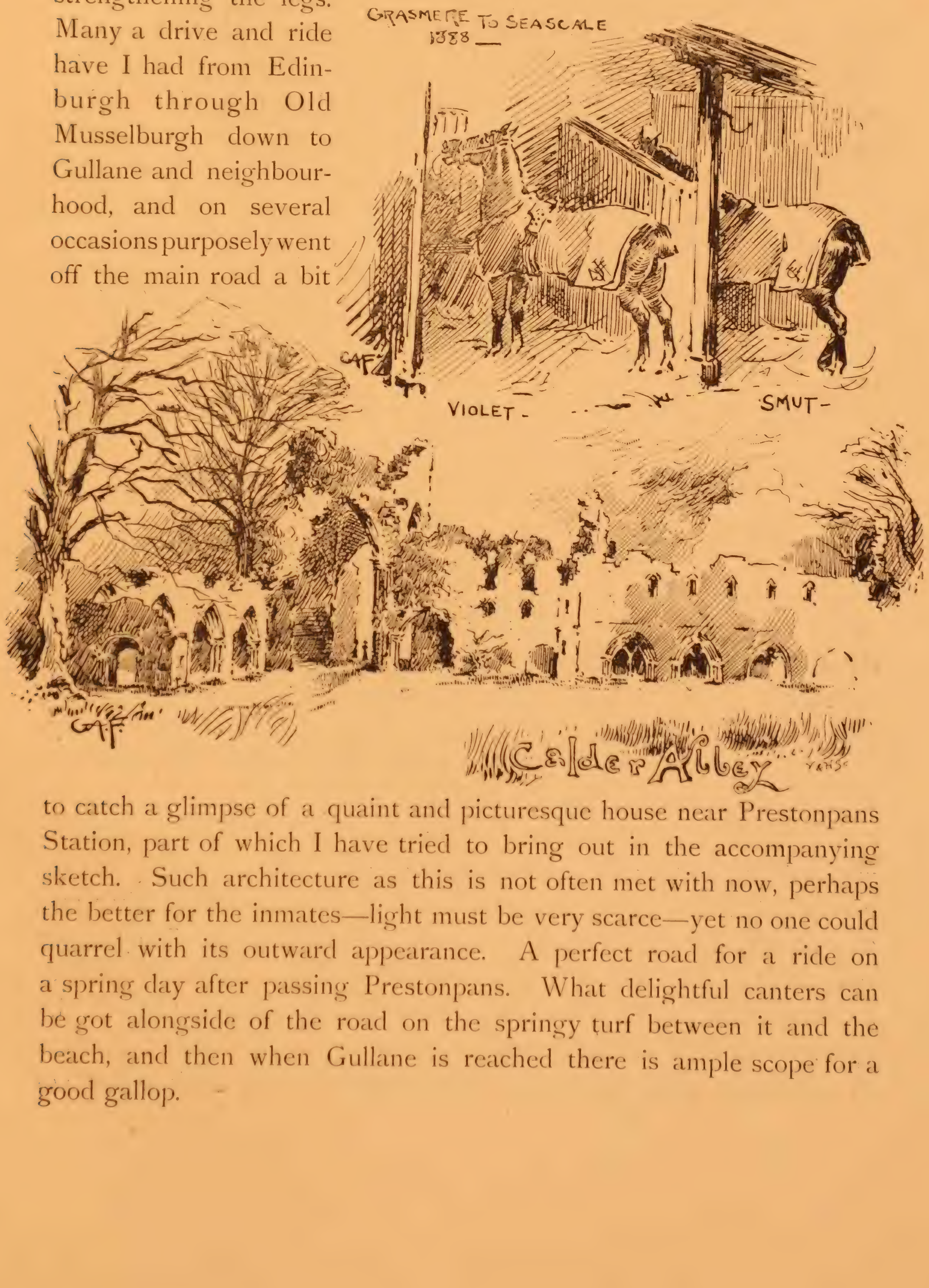
THE WOOL-PACK INN.

Cumberland and Westmoreland are lovely counties for touring through, whether it be walking or on horseback. The accompanying sketch of Ennerdale will help to convey an impression to the reader of what some of the scenery is like. Devonshire, too, at the other extreme of England, has a charm of its own, and some delightful tours can be made through it. The picturesque overhanging houses and thatched roof cottages add a special charm to the small towns and villages. The coast scenes are lovely, especially between Berry Head and Saltcombe in the south, and near Clovelly in the north.

G.A.F.
Preston-Pans -

Never miss a chance of a canter along good sands, and walk your "gee" into the sea if he will go—nothing like salt water for strengthening the legs.

Many a drive and ride have I had from Edinburgh through Old Musselburgh down to Gullane and neighbourhood, and on several occasions purposely went off the main road a bit



to catch a glimpse of a quaint and picturesque house near Prestonpans Station, part of which I have tried to bring out in the accompanying sketch. Such architecture as this is not often met with now, perhaps the better for the inmates—light must be very scarce—yet no one could quarrel with its outward appearance. A perfect road for a ride on a spring day after passing Prestonpans. What delightful canters can be got alongside of the road on the springy turf between it and the beach, and then when Gullane is reached there is ample scope for a good gallop.

Coming home once from Cowes training stables, where I had been staying a night, I rode my pony by way of the sands, and attempted to ford a small reach of sea near Luffness. It ended in our having to swim for it some twenty or more yards. As I was too heavy for "Kitty," having on Jack boots, which soon filled with water, I slid off and swam by her side, striking out with the right and holding her rein with the left hand. To add to our discomfort

the sands on the opposite side were quicksandy, and she nearly sunk up to her girths in places. We lost a stirrup over it, and I had to ride home some fourteen miles, like a drowned rat part of the way. The friction on the saddle, plus the salt water, did not improve the complexion of my skin, and for days I was very sore.

How different the accommodation must have been for horses, as well as for the travellers themselves, at most of the country inns a quarter of a century ago is well instanced in a tour my father and two others made on horseback into Scotland in 1867. They never got into bed without having first of all a good search for animals of a parasitic nature, and often were rewarded by many a "kill in the open." On one occasion there was no corn to be had at the inn, so one of the party went foraging for oats, bringing back a stone of

A BIT OF OLD DEVON.

them from a farm some little distance off, which was the equivalent to six feeds.

On looking into some of my father's diaries, which he has lent me, I find accounts of two very long tours; the one with a dogcart through Wales from Warwickshire, in which he covered a distance of 355 miles in a fortnight with the same horse; the other, also from Warwickshire, in a waggonette and pair, into Devonshire and back, making a journey of 370 miles.

Both of these tours show what can be done by careful management and close attention on the part of the owner himself to the baiting, grooming, &c. of his horses. An account of the latter journey, extracted from my father's diary, may be interesting to the reader.

Tuesday, 25th June 1872.—Showery. Left Leamington with my wife, two eldest children (seven and five), and coachman, in the waggonette and pair ("General" and "Jessie"), at 8.15 A.M., for Pershore, in Worcestershire, baiting at Stratford-on-Avon (30 miles).

Wednesday, 26th.—Fine morning, but came on showery. Continued our drive, 10.15 A.M., for Gloucester (Bell Hotel), passing through Tewkesbury, where we pulled up to inspect the fine old abbey church. Reached Gloucester at 1 o'clock (20 miles). Attended afternoon service at the fine cathedral, and afterwards strolled about the town and went over a large lucifer-match factory, with which we were much interested.

Thursday, 27th.—Fine morning. Left here at 8.20 A.M. for Bristol, *viâ* Berkeley, where we baited for three hours, and during this time visited Berkeley Castle; were shown many interesting relics, amongst which the sword Edward II. was supposed to have been murdered with, &c. From Berkeley it rained incessantly to Clifton. Here we put up the horses at the Clifton Downs Hotel, and ourselves by invite became the guests of some old friends in Victoria Square. Sat down a party of nineteen to dinner this evening.

Monday, 1st July.—Remained here until this morning, taking a short drive of 12 miles to Clevedon on Saturday. Attended Bristol Cathedral and Redcliffe Church on Sunday, the latter a beautiful

building, and lately repaired with great taste. Left Clifton, 9.30 A.M., for Bridgewater, *viâ* Cross, where we baited. A somewhat uninteresting drive, passing the Brent Knoll, a highish hill rising from the marshes. Bridgewater, celebrated for its "bathbricks," made from the mud thrown up by the tide. We slept at the Clarence Hotel, very comfortable and moderate. Our drive 34 miles.

Tuesday, 2nd.—Fine. Left for Porlock (31 miles), which we did in a single stage; put up at the "Ship." The village is one mile from the sea. The children getting on capitally, and all the better for the journey; full of spirits.

Wednesday, 3rd.—Had a beautiful drive to Lynmouth (17 miles), but so hilly that we took three and a half hours. Ascended Exmoor, 1100 feet above the sea; the drive, up through some charming woods teaming with whinberries and wild strawberries, much to the children's joy. Lynmouth, a beautiful spot; took a fine walk along the cliffs to the Valley of Rocks, as fine a walk as I ever remember taking in England.

Thursday, 4th.—Slept last night at the Lynmouth Hotel. Left, 8.30 A.M., for Ilfracombe (20 miles). Here the rock scenery very grand, but slate not equal, in my mind, to a limestone coast for beauty. Lovely bathing to be had.

Friday, 5th.—Fine and calm. After some difficulty succeeded in getting one of the horses aboard the steamer by which we sailed to Porteshead—a splendid sail along the Devonshire coast. Drove from here to Clifton, and were again the guests of our friends there.

Saturday, 6th.—Fine and very hot. Drove to Bath, where we put up at the York Hotel. Called on some friends here.

Monday, 7th.—Left early for Cheltenham (44 miles); baiting at Stroud. Called on an old schoolfellow at the latter place.

Tuesday, 9th.—Reached Pershore, where we stayed with my mother.

Wednesday, 10th.—Fine. Took a short drive to Bricklehampton.

Thursday, 11th.—Showery. Left Pershore for Leamington,

A DEVONSHIRE COTTAGE.

after completing a drive of 370 miles, including 70 by steamer, and no contretemps.

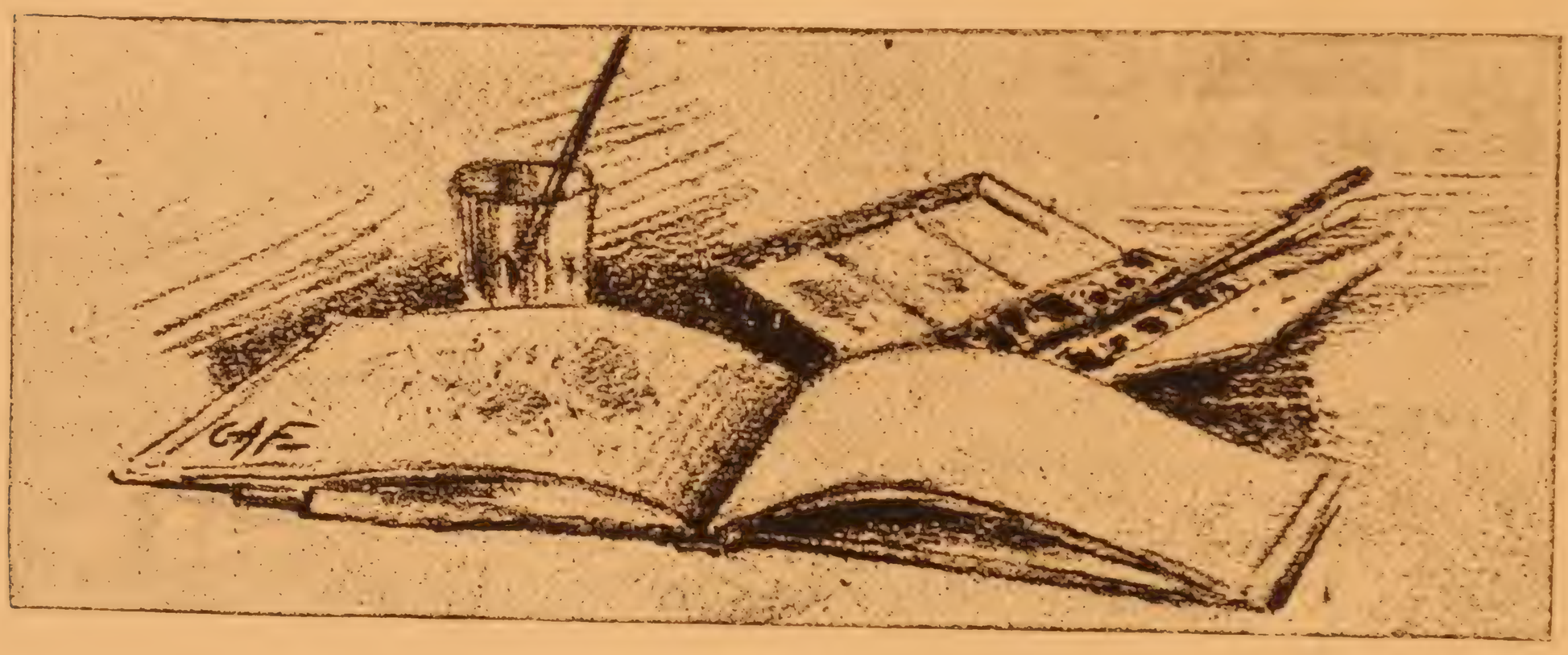
My father was given occasionally to testing the capabilities of his horses, and I find recorded a drive from Pershore to Leamington (31 miles), which was accomplished in three hours and ten minutes—not bad travelling for a pair with a waggonette behind them.

He found that for a long journey 25 miles a day was sufficient to average when driving; and that 30 miles a day can be easily accomplished in the saddle, *i.e.*, of course, if the animals be sound and in condition. A slight lameness, though, is often eradicated after some days' travelling, which fact points rather to the lameness being only due to rheumatism.

There are two great adjuncts to a journey in my mind—the one is, keeping a diary with a rough map; and the other is, to be able to sketch even in the roughest manner. It isn't easy to carry a camera on the back of a horse, but it is possible to keep a sketch-book in your pocket, and I maintain that a much larger proportion of people would make moderate sketchers in time if they had a little patience, and began early enough. How much more interesting it is to look through an album of sketches than wading through a large number of photographs. Sketching impresses the scene so much more upon the individual at the time that he is able to discuss the subject with his friends with far greater freedom. I do not, for one moment, wish to run down photography, which is invaluable, especially to those who have not the slightest talent for sketching.

It might appear to some at first sight that riding and driving tours were expensive ways of seeing the country. So they are, if a man-servant is needed, but otherwise the cost is not great. Take, for example, a man with two hunters—these, under ordinary circumstances, would be "eating their heads off" in the stable all the summer, or turned out to grass for six weeks; it is, however, quite possible to make use of them for a week's tour during August or early in September, unless the owner intends to do a little cub hunting. Quiet riding on the hard roads will do a hunter no harm whatever,

so long as he gets a comparative rest of some three weeks' walking exercise previous to the hunting season. The cost of one horse is not more than 5/6 per day, *i.e.*, 4/- for the night at an inn, including stabling and two feeds, and 1/6 for his corn and gruel during the day; so that 150 or 200 miles might be easily done in a week at a cost of some 30/-, exclusive of your own bill; and you will have seen, perhaps, an entirely new district, travelling in the pleasantest way imaginable.



CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO DUBLIN.

THERE are many ways of procuring a horse, but a good one is not too easily met with. My father, always a good judge of horse-flesh, told me he once spotted from the roadside a nice young horse in a plough, and, thinking it would make a good leader for his tandem, he called up the ploughman and enquired if he thought the owner would part with it. On being answered in the affirmative, my father said he would send his groom round next day for it, so that he might give the young animal a trial, which proved satisfactory in the end for both parties. We hear occasionally of cab horses being turned into excellent hunters, and several well-known chasers have been "nobodies" to start with. Take, for instance, "Old Joe," by "Barefoot," out of "Spot," who went begging at £25, and afterwards, in 1886, won the Liverpool Grand National "in a common canter," and there were twenty-three starters.

In my humble opinion, rather than casually fall in with an unknown animal at a sale, the best and most enjoyable way, if the

would-be purchaser is at liberty, and has all the necessary pluck and activity, is to pay a visit to Ireland, that home of horses where everyone nearly knows something about a horse, and go a regular hunting round the dealers. It is argued that a man should buy from the farmers who breed hunters and the dealers in the neighbourhood in which he hunts. This is reasonable enough, but if he is not suited there, let him go to Ireland, where he is sure to meet with success.

According to Whyte Melville, in Ireland the majority of horses in his time were clean bred, owing to the Clydesdale and Suffolk-Punch being only recently imported; and, even now, most hunters over there can boast of a respectable pedigree. Most of the hunters I came across during my short visit were at least two or three parts thoroughbred. The training of a hunter, too, is different over there; the fencing of the country assists the trainer. A horse that can gather itself together to take a dyke, with a little extra practice at timber in this country, is fit for anything, and will never refuse a wall or water. For those who do not know the definition of a dyke, it is a deep ditch with the soil scooped out and thrown on one or both sides, in the form of banking. To take a fence of this description a horse has to gather itself like a goat and spring on to the bank first, and then, after balancing on the eminence, makes another leap over the ditch. Very clever hunters get into a habit of topping these banks, if not too high; and in this lies a great risk, especially if the ditch be very deep on the opposite side. Banking teaches a rider to have a light hand on his reins, and an Irishman generally takes his fences slower to enable his animal to gather itself together. It is interesting to watch an Irish horse-breaker driving his pupils over such fences, and to watch their agile movements. He never stops until they are thoroughly broken in.

An Irish horse is bound to be good at walls and timber, owing to the amount of spring he has in him, and the confidence he has gained in jumping his native dykes will never let him refuse a brook in this country; "he is accustomed to spring from his back and cover large places out of a trot;" and his "faculty of jumping at short

notice" is one of the "choicest qualities" he possesses. You must give him his head though, and he will measure his own distance far better than you can. "They seem intuitively to apprehend the character of the fences they have to deal with."

I have always kept a diary, and so will briefly describe a short visit to the "Emerald Isle."

Monday, 13th February.—Off by train to Greenock. Caught the night boat for Dublin, where I arrived next day about 1 P.M.

Tuesday, 14th.—Took a bedroom at the old Gresham Hotel. My first errand was to drive myself in an "Irish jolting car" out to Liffey Bank to call on some people I had brought an introduction to, in order that I might be informed of the whereabouts of the numerous horse-dealers round about Dublin. Car-drivers in this city are a different "breed" to cabmen in "Auld Reekie." They seem devoted to their little hacks, keep them in condition, and, in consequence, get a deal of good work out of them. "Paddy" was usually willing to take an extra sixpence and let me handle the "ribbons" myself—not so easy as it looks at first sight to stick on these small cars sideways and drive at the same time. Throughout my visit I had many a good drive in this novel way. After getting the information I required I drove straight to Daley's place; there Daley himself showed me round all his "boxes," and ordered out several useful-looking hunters, which I was permitted in turn to mount and ride over a quarter-mile course, with a variety of fences. How they all went—no refusals and all clean jumpers. His prices, though, were beyond me—none less than £100—so we said good-bye to each other. The next move was to drive through that grand Phœnix Park, passing the polo ground and the spot where that horrid double murder was committed, until we reached the little village of Castleknock, near which the Manleys have a fine stud of hunters and chasers. Here I thoroughly enjoyed myself, and became acquainted for the first time with the Irish banks and dykes. Young Manley himself trotted out three or four likely animals, and after one of his "rough riders" had taken a spin round the course, I did

the same on them all. I took a great fancy to a little "brown." He *could* just stretch his legs and fly the ditches and top the banks in the true Irish fashion. They have some forty acres of meadow land there, with a winding stream running through it, so we repaired to another part, Manley on one and I mounted on another. We tried every conceivable jump from fifteen feet of water to the largest banks there were in the place. I settled to call next day, and have another trial. Driving back to the "Gresham," I can tell you I enjoyed my dinner in no mistake, and slept as sound as a top.

Wednesday, 15th.—Hired a hunter from Scully, a well-known Dublin dealer, and hacked out to Manley's. Saw one or two more horses; but finally fixed on the little "brown," if he would give me a trial "to hounds" with him. This request was willingly complied with. The rest of the day spent in looking round the old part of the town round about the Castle and the quay, picking up first one or two sporting prints at this dealer's, and then an original edition, illustrated by Rowlandson or John Leech, in that antiquarian book-shop. It was great fun bargaining down the dealers. What prices they would take if they could!

Thursday, 16th.—Rode out to the Richmond Barracks on another of Scully's "gees." He is the man to go to for a hack or hunter on hire; he keeps very few screws. The Scots Guards were stationed there then, and I was introduced to several at lunch, all of whom spoke very highly of Manley, who supplies a large number of the officers at the Richmond Barracks with hunters. One young lieutenant,

who was anxious to part with his small stud, suggested riding over to Castleknock and giving a mare and a chesnut cob of his a "school" over the fences. We did so, and I found her a big jumper, but dwelt too much over her fences. The cob was an excellent little jumper. Neither came up to my little "brown." We had a good day, though, and a grand gallop together in the Phœnix Park. In the afternoon a friend showed me round Dublin Castle, and introduced me, amongst others, to the old Master of the Horse, who spoke in glowing terms of Manley's little "brown," which he had heard very good accounts of. This round-about recommendation settled the question, and "Shamrock" was mine from that instant, and I would hunt him with the Meath Hounds, not on trial, but as my own. Called at a "vet.'s" in the evening, and engaged him to drive me out to Castleknock next morning to examine the new hunter. We had a very interesting "crack," especially so on account of our being connected with kindred professions, he a "vet.," and I a "medical."

Friday, 17th.—Mr A—— drove me out in his own buggy, a new-fashioned Canadian one of extraordinary light weight, and remarkably cheap—delivered in England to his door for £15. He goes in strongly for ponies, and was "as proud as punch" of a young roan which he had bred himself. What lovely action she had, and equal to a mile in less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. "Shamrock" was pronounced "as sound as a bell;" so I had nothing to do but to mount at once, as I had a pair of breeches and gaiters on, and be off to the Meet of the Meath Hounds at Hamwood House. Young Manley accompanied me. We were a bit late; they had drawn the first covert blank. We fell in with them, though, almost directly afterwards, as the hounds and "field" were making for the next covert, but unfortunately we didn't find here either. "For the third time of asking" we were again disappointed, but, three miles off, Colistown proved successful, and its fox gave us an hour's run. My first impression of such a cavalcade of horsemen streaming down the road to covert at hounds' pace was of the most lively description. Upwards of three hundred, including over one hundred red coats. What a glorious sight! I had seen big

meets in Warwickshire and in Rutland, but never before had I seen so many ready for the fray. "In for a penny in for a pound," I was initialled into this vast crowd, and I had to make the best of it with my little stranger—not by any means a trifling ordeal. When we got out this fox then came the difficulty—to struggle out of the crowd and take your own line. I took for a pilot one whom I had lately become acquainted with, and just let the little "brown" have his head. We were going over the somewhat water-logged pastures at a very good pace, dyke after dyke, and well to the front. "Grief was rife enough," as the account of the run in *The Field* afterwards stated. It seemed to me we simply raced over those meadows; all I had to do was to sit well down, and never once had to use my spurs. Late in the afternoon, after another fox had been found, I had a piece of bad luck; "Shamrock" cut his off-knee badly with a flint while scrambling up a steep bank. It necessitated our "turning tail" to Castleknock, where he was doomed to undergo treatment for some time to come, and eventually shipped over to Scotland. He was a first-rate jumper, and I made use of him in the Highland and Agricultural Show of 1893, jumping him two days, and selling him afterwards to the Master of a Border pack.

Saturday, 18th.—Drove over to Manley's again, and purchased another, a young bay mare of promise, with whom I had a grand tussle at first. Several of the Scots Guards were "schooling" hunters round the place, and I picked up a good many little points of horsemanship from them. These visits were always pleasant to Manley. The old father would spin many a yarn over his glass of whisky, which usually finished an afternoon's "schooling." What a wonderful amount of neat spirit some of these Irishmen can put down in a day—quite equivalent, I am sure, to a Highlander's share. Dined out with some friends.

Sunday, 19th.—Took a walk through the Phœnix Park, and paid a final visit to Castleknock.

Monday, 20th.—Rose at six o'clock, and had a trial of some ponies in harness belonging to a butcher well known for his "hacks."

Settled upon a little mare with very pretty action and plenty of pace —a demon, though, at trains and traction engines. After a rapid run round in search of more old curiosities in the shape of books and prints, and making some rare bargains, I packed up my "traps" and was off with the two animals for Greenock, not altogether dissatisfied with my visit to "Paddyland." A rough passage, coupled with the entire charge of two strange "gees," is not to be envied. Poor things; what an uncomfortable time they must have had below, standing twenty-six hours boxed up, and perishingly cold, with the waves washing over the deck and the boat pitching and tossing in the most merciless fashion. If only for their sakes, I was glad to see "Auld Reekie" once more.

CHAPTER IV.

A RIDING CLASSIFICATION.

We learn so much in the University of Edinburgh about classification from our botany days right up to the study of nerve diseases, that I am now going to make a rough attempt at classifying riding men:—

I. Congenital—

(1) Those whose ancestors have been followers of the chase for generations.

(2) Those whose fathers and uncles have been sportsmen in this line, and have in turn been initiated into the art of riding by them.

II. Acquired—

(1) Those who have acquired the love of riding from a child, and who have hunted.

(2) Those who have acquired the same love, but have not hunted.

(3) Those who have acquired a knowledge of riding from their school or college companions, or later in life, and put this into practice.

(4) Those who occasionally frequent the back of a horse, because it is the thing to do, and because they have adopted a "horsey" get-up.

(5) Those who are ordered to ride, whether they like it or not, by a medical man, for their general health.

This is but a faulty classification, and I must leave the reader to think out for himself amongst his acquaintances an illustration of each of the above. Riding is only a step towards hunting—the

noblest of all our field sports—and every young rider, as a rule, longs for a day's run with hounds, just as much as an assistant looks forward to the absence of his chief, so that he may have a day's operating or lecturing. A man who has one hunter may follow hounds just as well and often far better than he who has a stable full of horses, for very often the latter never gets to know the real qualities of one of his hunters, simply because he has too many, and can never give any one of them sufficient trial. To be a true sportsman, however, in this branch, a man must be thoroughly acquainted with and fond of his mount —there must be a mutual sympathy between rider and horse, as well as regard for the hounds. "If a man wants to ride well he must keep his nerves in proper order, and these depend upon the state of health, so let him not drink and smoke until two or three in the morning. To perform well over a country, he should be in bed by eleven sharp." These are the sentiments of a well-known sportsman.

Many a young fellow owes much to a friendly intercourse with the huntsman of the pack he is a member of. A good huntsman, if he bears out the following, is no ordinary mortal, and is one from whom much can be learnt, in more ways than one:—

Young, strong, and active;
Bold, enterprising,
Fond of diversion,
With sense and good temper.
He is sober, and cleanly, and civil,
Good horseman as well as good groom.
He's a voice strong and clear,
With an eye quick to see,
Not to mention an excellent ear;
Quiet, patient, and lacking conceit;
Leaves his hounds quite alone when they hunt,
But with genius helps when they cannot.*

To appreciate all the qualities of a good huntsman one must know him at the kennels and in his own home amongst his family, if he is blessed with one, as well as in the hunting field. His cottage, attached

* With apologies to Vero Shaw, B.A.

to the kennels, is the picture of neatness, homeliness, and contentment. There one will always find him on "off-days," hospitable and ever ready to greet a friend for a chat about sport—as willing to hear his voice as he is to "trot out" in turn some of his own experiences, full of anecdote and useful information.

"CROPPIE BOY."

LINLITHGOW AND STIRLINGSHIRE FOXHOUNDS.

CHAPTER V.

HUNTING REMINISCENCES OF 1892-93.

THERE are few who cannot recall their first day's hunting, or the exciting moments previous to the dropping of the flag for their first point-to-point race; or, again, the nervous feeling on encountering the first obstacle in a show-ring? It is often the first impressions which we can best recall, and which as often, perhaps, give us the greatest pleasure.

We talk of discipline in a public school and at a university; but the hunting field is also a place to learn that in. Here a young fellow is not as free as he supposes he will be. He must take up a very subordinate position and learn to keep in the background as much as possible until he is well initiated into the art of hunting, however good a rider he may think himself, or else the Master and hunt-servants will be down on him "in a crack" with such exclamations as "'Ware, young grass! D'ye want to ruin a farmer's crops for him?" "Keep off those hounds, you young scroundrel! How the d—— do you think hounds can cast about and you right in amongst 'em?" "Get out of the crowd with that kicking beast!" "D—— you, come back, and hold that d——d horse in, or else you want to hunt the hounds yourself!" Such remarks as these, when bellowed out before the whole field perhaps,

are sufficient in themselves to make you take a back seat for a bit and be more careful in the future. It is really only by these measures that one finds at first one's own position; and, if taken in good part, knowing they are only made in the interest of sport, one will eat "humble pie," and learn to sympathise with the poor huntsman in his lament so aptly put in the first verse of Egerton Warburton's "Home with the Hounds; or, the Huntsman's Lament":—

"Over-ridden! over-ridden!
All along of that the check;
When the ditch that gemman slid in,
Don't I wish he'd broke his neck.
I to hunt my hounds am able,
Would the field but play me fair;
Mobb'd at Smithfield by the rabble,
Who a fox could follow there?"

With reference to the frontispiece, "Honour Bright" is too well known in hunting circles in Scotland to bear any special mention here. Suffice it to say that he can justly wear the motto of the Scots Greys, "Second to none," amongst all first-class hunters.

There is nothing like a whole season's hunting of, say, an average of two days a week or more for taking the conceit out of a man. Whatever may have been his ideas on the subject before, his notions of hunting, horses, and hounds in general become infinitely more matured; he talks less and thinks more. After finishing a good season, he is in much the same frame of mind as a young resident surgeon or physician leaving the infirmary, where he has been some six months—a humbler, but a wiser, man.

I had taken up my quarters, not in a hunting box, but in a section of University Hall, viz., Old Riddle's Court, leading off the High Street, with absolutely no intention of doing any hunting. But, when November came round, the temptation was too strong, and it was fated I should have my little "fling."

I was tired of "diggs," and this antiquated and somewhat romantic

G.A.F.
Lawnmarket
Edinburgh
Riddles Court

old building took my fancy. Riddle's Court dates back to the sixteenth century. It was once the residence of a Bailie Macmorran, a wealthy merchant of the city, and on several occasions Royalty had graced its apartments before the late lamented bailie was shot dead by a High School boy. For further history of this old pile I must refer the reader to a book on "Old Edinburgh." Let not, however, the visitor judge of this old place now by its outward appearance. Many have done so, and many have been pleasantly disappointed. The alterations and refurnishing of the whole to make it suitable for a University Hall are only a small fraction of the noble work put forward in the interest of so many.

Two of us went to see an animal I had set my heart on, and, after a few trial jumps, this "buckshot white" was in my possession, and a good 'un he proved to be. I am glad to say, too, he is still doing good work in the service of a well-known Master of Hounds.

Practically speaking, I served my apprenticeship with "Buckshot," who had previously been hunted in Ireland, and a better natured animal never was bridled. We went everywhere together, and we never fell out, excepting on a few occasions at the beginning of the season, when in cold blood he refused to do what I wanted. This was one of the good lessons I learnt—never to trifle with an animal in cold blood, and do needless work just to gratify a passing whim. "Buckshot" and I were never thrown out of the hounds, and we were always in the swing of the hunt, for when his blood was really up he would go, and did not know what it was to give in.

The season of 1892-93 of the L. and S. foxhounds was not an exceptional one, either one way or the other, although it was noted for two of their best runs in the present huntsman's memory.

It is needless to describe the many pleasant days' hunting I experienced, yet most of them have a place in my diary. Saturdays were our best days as a rule, the meets well away from the town, some fifteen or twenty miles. My pony cart was brought round by 9 A.M. sharp, and the High Street inhabitants became accustomed to the sight of a pair of boots and spurs thumping out of the old

close leading from Riddle's Court. I remember the tall recruiting sergeant, with his gorgeous ribbons, round the corner. How he eyed me as I came out of that close. He seemed to think we didn't exactly match one another, the close and my get-up. Well, we were down in nice time at the Haymarket for the 9.20 special hunt train. The groom had boxed my hunter, and in half an hour's time we were all leading our horses out of their boxes down to the "Star and Garter" at Linlithgow. This old inn is always the headquarters of the Hunt when meets are in the Linlithgow direction, and its popular landlord makes things as comfortable as possible for horses and every one. How his ham and eggs were relished after a hard day when many of us turned up, one after another, in the coffee-room to snatch down what we could before the express train arrived to take us back to Edinburgh.

By many "The Provinces" are looked down on, and it is to "The Shires" that they look for all true sport. Good runs are not so plentiful, perhaps, in this part of Scotland, where there is so much wire, but when an open country is chosen by a "stout hill fox," then the run is a run in no mistake.

Such a run as I shall shortly describe in the huntsman's own words can vie with many a day's sport in the Midland counties or elsewhere for pace and variety of country.

"Croppie Boy," formerly huntsman to The Goodwood, wrote this little account in my old room at Riddle's, and sent it to *Land and Water*:—

"Alderstone the Meet; rough, wild, and stormy the day (Tuesday, 14th March 1893). Any odds against there being a scent, and every one prepared for a bad day. How wise we all are in our generation, and yet how little we know! A leash of foxes in the first covert; hounds quickly away down wind from Alderstone wilderness to Calderwood, and on to the farm of Content, where the fox beat them. A long draw before again finding, though hounds touched the line of a travelling fox near Hermand, and at three o'clock we find ourselves at Livingstone. Several of the original field had gone home, and a few farmers from Calder Fair come to join us on the chance of a

THE PENTLAND HILLS.

gallop with an afternoon fox. Well were they and the few that stayed on rewarded. The run of the season again. Better than the run which compassed the death of the 'golden-fox,' for was not this a straight eight-mile point, and all up wind? Add to this that it was done in thirty-five minutes, over a beautiful country, chiefly old grass, and the fox got to ground and so lives to run again, and you have an idea what a grand gallop it was; the only regrettable incident being that Mr W. J. D.'s grand old grey horse 'The Dream' was lamed. The Moss Wood provided the fox, a real rover; Wallhouse Craigs was his home, and he got there in the quickest and straightest way, going by Dechmont Hill, down over the Bathgate Road to Drumcross, thence by the west end of Bangour Strips, a bee line to Cairnpapple, and down to Wallhouse Craigs, where an open earth saved his life. Not more than a dozen saw this good run, but they were all well pleased, and most of them danced all night at the Voucher Hunt Ball in the Waterloo Rooms."

"Croppie Boy," with his usual pithy and cheery style of writing, has described this run "to a nicety."

Having sent on my hunter with the groom, I drove M. R——, who sometimes ran on foot, to the Meet, a distance of twelve miles; mounted the young bay mare I brought over from Ireland with me, and it was with her we found ourselves well up at the finish, amongst the few whom "Croppie Boy" referred to. During the afternoon Ned tried to get J. F—— and myself down over a line of swing-gates, but the mare proved equal to the occasion, and from that time forward Ned wanted her for himself to ride.

It was six o'clock and dusk before the last of us left Wallhouse Craigs, after trying to unearth this good old fox. I had to canter six miles back to Linlithgow in less than half an hour, in order to catch the train. The mare must have done some five and forty miles altogether that day, and never, I should think, were more walls and fences taken in one run. I sent a man out, however, next day for her, and she walked back from Linlithgow "as game as a chicken."

"'TWAS A STOUT HILL-FOX—
THE GAMEST OLD VARMINT THAT
EVER DREW BREATH."

Only on one occasion did she throw me out of the hounds, and on that day I was just as much at fault as she was. She had a nasty temper when she liked, and my patience was not sufficient to humour her in the right way.

It is very hard to throw yourself out on purpose and return if you think your mount has had enough. One day I stuck to it too long, when I knew "Buckshot" was out of condition—a fortnight's frost had done this—and the first open day proved to be the longest day of the season. Out of a fairly big field only seven of us, besides the hunt servants, were still at it after six o'clock. We had been on a fox for nearly three hours, and lost him. The going had been very heavy, and it was with great difficulty, when Ned settled to call the hounds together, that I could get my beast out of a walk to catch the train—in fact, the last mile along the Canal I couldn't. He had been going strong all day, and was absolutely done at the finish; his poor heart was pulsating some two feet beyond the normal site of the "apex-beat," and, like a sledge-hammer at work, was shaking his whole frame. I did get him to the stables at last, but for the first time he refused his gruel, standing stiff and trembling all over, with this dreadful throbbing going on. I didn't have a happy journey back, travelling with him in the horse-box. This seemed to give him comfort—a sight of me—and I had pictured all kinds of things, having often heard of horses being run to death. When I

GOING TO THE RACES—A LINK OF THE PAST.

got him into his own stable at Croall's Bazaar, where I had some boxes, he seemed to collapse altogether. A pint of whisky brought him round, and he gradually improved, after a restless night. One more mile and he might never have been bridled again. My zeal to finish with the others was sufficient to make his good nature respond, but I learnt a lesson for the future.

It is impossible to know the country you hunt in well in one season. If a man has an eye for a country and is an athlete himself, and can therefore measure his horse's pluck by his own, he is sure to find that he gains confidence in himself, very much sooner than others who have not the same capacity. A lover of cross-country jumping on foot has a decided pull over one who has never indulged in that excellent sport. But my advice is, always choose a good pilot—not necessarily the red-coated tribe, as they are often deceptive. I found this to my cost on several occasions.

AT THE RACES.

As to the point-to-point races, which came on towards the end of the season. I was prevented from riding in our own, owing to "Buckshot" having encountered a nasty piece of wire some days previous, which threw him out of condition. I did have the good fortune, however, to ride in another point-to-point later on near Hamilton. It was one of my red-letter days, although it ended unluckily for me. A party of six of us, including four of the 5th Dragoons, went from Edinburgh with our horses, and we were most hospitably entertained at the Master's beautiful house. We all lunched "in pink" (a borrowed coat for the occasion, as far as I was concerned, never having got beyond a dark grey frock coat). A numerous cavalcade departed from Hamilton Town Cross, where we all met, to

Mr R's Bon Mot"
Mr Y's "Cleopatra"
Mr R's "Credit".
Hon. A. R's "Courtney"
G.A.F.
W.J.D.
[Starter]
Hon. G. H's "Parkin"
G.A.F's "Buckshot"
The Start
"Getting them ready"

How the race was lost—
Sandy R. wins in a canter—

Muirmadkin and Unthank farm steading. The local newspaper said, "Never since the days of the 'Sporting Duke' had a similar cavalcade been seen passing through the streets of Motherwell." This may be taken, however, for what it is worth. Suffice it to say, there was a goodly "turnout" of carriages and riders and foot people, and the day seemed to be most enjoyable for everyone.

The course was a stiffish one—some four miles, with at least thirty obstacles, mostly fly fences, and not a few ploughs.

The open race came off first, and, in the words of the newspaper, it ran as follows:—"'Buckshot' led to the big open ditch" [this, by the by, is invariably the case with a novice, though I certainly was advised to give 'em a lead], "where his rider was thrown" [my fault entirely, having foolishly charged the stiffest part of the open jump at racing pace, and, thinking "Buckshot" would not refuse, I didn't stick my knees in tight enough, so, swerving suddenly round, he landed me in the ditch, but good-naturedly did not bolt. We were together again in a very short time, after losing at least half a mile on the others]. "'Courtney,' 'Peterkin,' and 'Cleopatra' took up the running, till, passing the far-away flag, the latter threw its rider. Meanwhile 'Buckshot' made up the leeway, and, passing 'Peterkin,' got within a length of the winner. The two ran in this order until the third last fence, where 'Buckshot' fell, and 'Courtney' won by five lengths. There was a bad third."

So ended my first race. My losing half a mile and redeeming it all again had taken too much out of "Buckshot," and the anxiety to pass "Courtney" so near the finish was too great, and I didn't take the proper precautions and steady him at this jump, which he cleared well in his stride; but, landing in a stiff plough, was unable to recover himself. Thus, as luck would have it, that very little horse I had ridden, curiously enough, in Ireland, when it belonged to the rider's brother, and one I knew to be inferior to my own, won the race simply through having a more experienced rider on its back, and one who knew the last moments of a race brought out some of the greatest skill in horsemanship.

THE OPEN DITCH—EGLINTON HUNT STEEPLECHASES.

The foregoing plate, which illustrates the "open ditch" and more modern "guard-rail" of a hunt steeplechase, is from a water-colour sketch I made with the aid of a small instantaneous photo taken by Mr Marshall Wane, of Edinburgh, with whom I have had several interesting chats on instantaneous photography; and it is of value in this way, that it shows well the exact attitude taken up by a horse as he flies a fence. Mr Wane has proved, too, in all his photographs of races and horse shows, &c., that it is impossible for an animal to have all four legs fully stretched out at one and the same time—even when midway between the take-off and landing places—whether he be in the act of jumping or galloping. When the fore legs are "tucked up," as in rising to a fence, the hind legs must necessarily be stretched out, and *vice versâ* during the descent; while midway between the take-off and landing place his attitude varies very much according to the obstacle to be contended with. The camera, and often the spectator, if quick enough, detects the most awkward and seemingly impossible positions, which perhaps never will find place on an artist's canvas, if he wishes to make his picture pleasing to the eye. Instantaneous photography has done much to interest scientific people, and has no doubt corrected artists' fallacies in this direction to a large extent; but there is moderation in all things, and the eye of the general public must be studied in the choosing of the most pleasing attitudes for pictures, and those which appeal to our average sense of vision; or else we wish to be Chinese, who claim, I believe, to have recognised these instantaneous positions long before the use of photography came in; hence many of their extraordinary works of art relating to animal life.

In conclusion, I may refer to several pleasant visits paid to Gullane, where I either stayed the night at the hotel or at the training stables. Here one was let into some of the secrets of the turf on a small scale. The old home of Dawson, the famous trainer of the equally famous "Ladas," could not fail to be full of interest.

The accompanying sketch shows the old shanty where the racers were all shod. A quainter bit of well-worn masonry could not easily

be imagined, and, doubtless, it has often attracted the attention of many a golfer, wending his way to the "teeing" ground for the first hole on these celebrated links.

The then occupant of the training stables had kept for some years fifteen or twenty flat racers and chasers; and to him and J. F——, a constant visitor there, I owe a good deal for many little kindnesses. Up at five in the morning, and out for a gallop on the sands. What a wide stretch of sands to take a spin over on a fresh morning; how invigorating and how delightful! Here many a trial

THE OLD FORGE, GULLANE.

had been run, and many a hope dashed to the ground. About ten o'clock the chasers would be sent over the fences round the little course, a well "schooled" one being chosen as a pilot, to make the pace for the "youngsters." Good stiff fences some of them were, and all with guard rails, to make them rise far back, so that they might lose no time in flying the fences. The rough-riders have a pretty hard time of it, and many a nasty fall; but, on the whole, they seem to come off pretty well, taking everything into consideration.

After a look round the boxes for the trainer to give his instructions about this, that, and the other, we would make for lunch, and, this over, at three o'clock some more chasers were seen round the course, and perhaps a visit from an owner wishing to ride his animal a trial. A certain number were always walked off daily to the sand-hills—to the treadmill, as the trainer humorously put it—where a couple of hours' steady walking, fetlock deep in sand, brought up their muscles better than anything else. A hearty dinner, with a pleasant chat over a glass of whisky and a pipe, ended the day's proceedings.

This trainer took in hand the "schooling" of hunters previous to the various hunt steeplechases, and it was in this way that I came to know him, by riding down "Buckshot" and "Stella" to Gullane, and leaving them there for a few weeks; and I can vouch for the extra eight shillings a week each, beyond their keep, not having been thrown away. The only thing about it is this, don't leave a hunter in training stables too long; his temper is apt to be soured from rough usage; and, after all, a hunter's work is not steeplechasing. He is apt to learn to rush his fences too much, and in this way it spoils him for the hunting field.

The season, then, of 1892-93 was a very enjoyable one for me in many respects, and on all sides I received much kindness and hospitality, made many acquaintances, and a few good friends.

Would that hunting involved less expense, and that there was more of it, as there is no sport like it for preserving the health—"I mean the preservation of health and keeping all the organs of the soul in a condition to execute her orders. Had that incomparable person whom I last quoted been a little more indulgent to himself in this point, the world might probably have enjoyed him much longer; whereas, through too great an application to his studies in his youth, he contracted that ill habit of body which, after a tedious sickness, carried him off in the fortieth year of his age; and the whole history we have of his life till that time is but one continued account of the behaviour of a noble soul struggling under innumerable pains and distempers.

"For my own part, I intend to hunt twice a week during my stay with Sir Roger; and shall prescribe the moderate use of this exercise to all my country friends as the best kind of physick for mending a bad constitution and preserving a good one. I cannot do this better than in the following lines out of Dryden:—

'The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade.
By chacé our long-liv'd fathers earn'd their food,
Toil strung the nerves, and purify'd the blood;
But we, their sons, a pamper'd race of men,
Are dwindled down to three-score years and ten.
Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise for cure on exercise depend;
God never made His work for man to mend.'"*

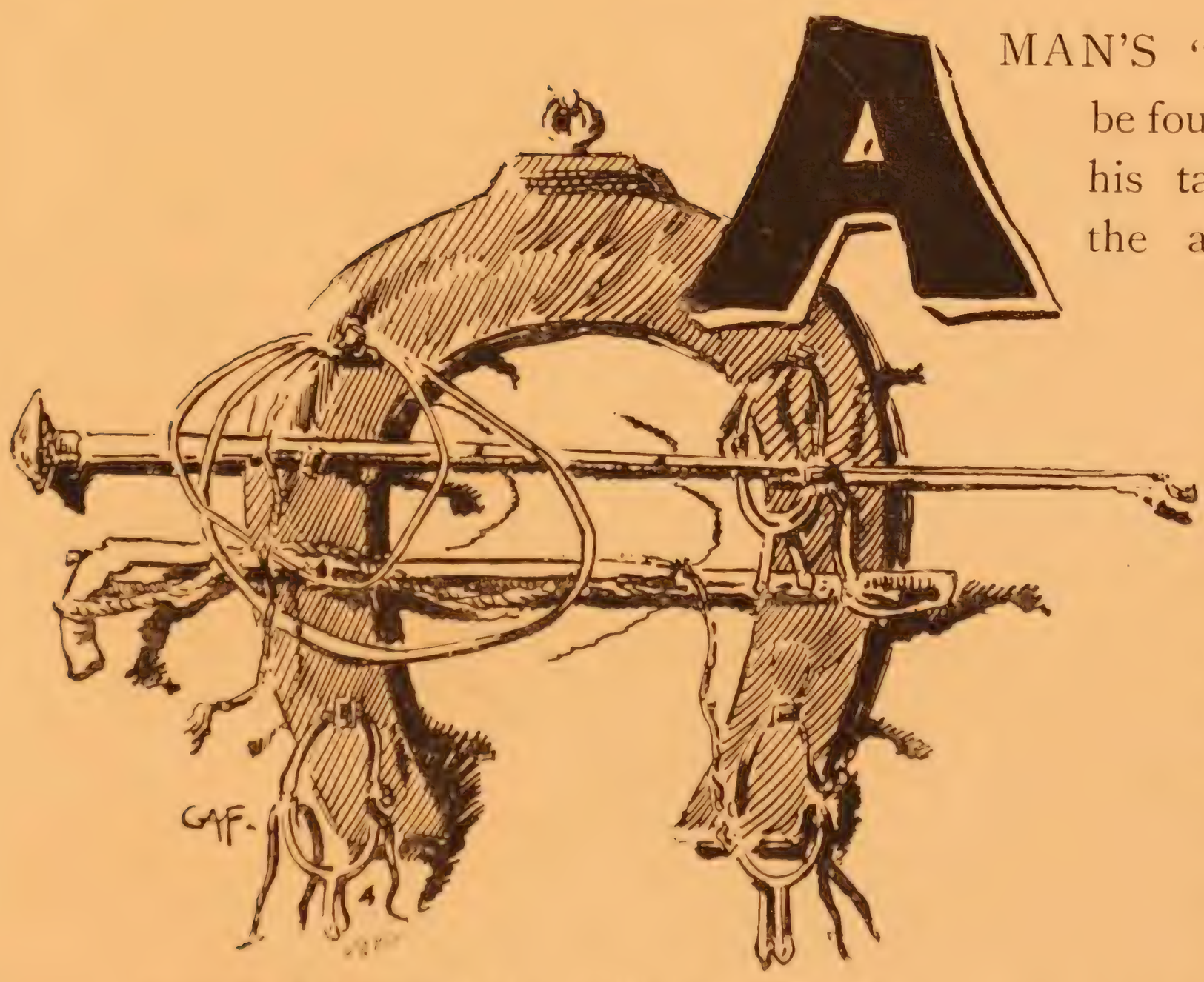
* Extract from *Days with Sir Roger de Coverley*—a reprint from the *Spectator*.

A BOY'S STUDY, UPPINGHAM SCHOOL.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ART OF FURNISHING

A SMOKING "DEN."



A MAN'S "den" is often to be found associated with his tastes in life, and the art of furnishing it grows up with him from his schoolboy days, when he probably had a "castle" of his own, should he happen to have been at a public school. A rowing man will have his winning oars suspended round the ceiling under the cornice; and, the seat he rowed upon, with the accompanying portion of boat, turned into a small cupboard, with the names of the eight oarsmen inscribed on it, will be seen in some noticeable place; and, if an Eton man, a floral hat hanging here and there from the corner of a picture—a reminiscence of the "Gala day." A fisherman has his walls adorned with rods and cases of monster trout, and pictures of salmon and fishing incidents.

The mantelpiece and brackets of an athlete team with pewters, cups, medals, and other more useful objects. But, in my humble opinion, a hunting man has more opportunities of adorning his "den" with a greater variety of decoration bearing on his special amusement. It is to the "den" of this last kind of sportsman that I wish now to turn the reader's attention.

Taking up, first of all, the choice of pictures, so much depends upon the pocket of the individual. To a wealthy man nothing is nicer than to see several good portraits in oils of his favourite animals hanging on the walls. The average man must be content with engravings, coloured prints, and photos. Some men will go into a shop and buy up a whole stock at a time, with no previous knowledge of what they are being run in for. How much more interesting and satisfactory, though, to oneself is it to pick up pictures by degrees. If a lover of old curiosities, nothing better repays one than a hunt round the slums of London, Manchester, or Dublin; but the purchaser must have his wits and eyes about him, or else the dealer will pawn off on him reprints by the dozen. To a riding man "old sporting prints" is quite a byword; how few, though, are there who really can estimate the true value of one of these. It takes a practised eye in no mistake, the dealer's devices are so numerous. I cannot imagine any one buying a "reprint," when he *knows* it to be one, for it must be acknowledged that many

of the old works in the sporting line are chiefly valuable now as curiosities, especially if they happen to be in their original frames; but, with few exceptions, the sporting artists of the past cannot compare with those of more modern date, whose name is legion, and who combine the true anatomy of the horse and his natural attitudes with general artistic effect, thus coming much nearer the ideal, which we are always aiming at.

In the old days, just as now, most lovers of horseflesh liked to have their walls adorned with pictures of their ancestors' faces, as well as pictures of their studs. We come across occasionally some of their works, and may perhaps make a bargain. The artists who were employed in the latter branch failed, as a rule, in hunting scenes. Wooton, who died in 1765, is a good example of this class of artist. Blenheim and Dytchly are the country mansions where most of his works are to be seen. George Stubbs (1724-1806), who was a keen anatomist, as well as an artist of great note, "was the first to give the poetry of life and motion to pictures of animals, and to go beyond the mere portrait of a Newmarket favourite or an over-fed ox." He was elected an A.R.A., and published *The Anatomy of the Horse*, with etchings from his own dissections. James Seymour (1702-1752) was

famous for hunting pieces and racehorses, and engravings after his works are well worth coming across. Lawrey Gilpin (1733-1807) was another who attained great success as an animal painter, and, coming under the notice of the Duke of Cumberland, was provided with a set of rooms at Newmarket, where he continued his studies. George Morland (1763-1804), of the old masters, is perhaps the best known to us now, not only for his animal and landscape painting, but also

on account of his profligate life, so aptly described by himself in his own epitaph—"Here lies a drunken dog." He was a genius in no mistake, for at sixteen years old he was exhibiting at the Royal Academy, but his life of reckless debauchery soon helped to promote his ruin in the prime of life. He could settle to no regular work, and at one time was the owner of a dozen horses, and was "cheated right and left by profligates, who combined horseracing, betting, and picture dealing;" and at another time was surrounded by a rioting

set of pot companions, who stood as his models, together with pigs, dogs, and birds, in his disorderly studio. He was arrested on several occasions for taking part in tavern riots, and died in a sponging house; three days afterwards his wife died of grief. Although not especially known for sporting works, the engravings after his pictures of country and farmyard scenes are of considerable value. There has been a good deal of reprinting of his work, so study the print well before paying a long price for a "Morland." He latterly painted with little thought or study, and his work was hastily conceived, but still it brings before us the healthful beauty of English scenes of a humble character.

The style of picture frames should be as varied as possible. Endeavour to get a different moulding for each picture, that is, of course, if you are not dealing with a set. Black and gold suits the old coloured prints better than anything, and the oak and walnut, with the various stains, suit best the modern engravings.

A word about the arrangement of the room and its pictures. Want of symmetry in a dining-room would not, perhaps, be so pleasing, but in a smoking "den" it is preferable, to my mind. Pictures should not all be hung in pairs and at regular intervals from one another, matched in size and so forth. Corners can be filled up to advantage with these pretty old corner cupboards, and a Chippendale chair or two seen about the room, besides a couple of good saddle-back lounges. Just as the pictures have been added to by degrees, so let the furniture be picked up, bit by bit, and in this way the owner

—unless he has the good fortune to drop into some old family furniture—will constantly be reminded of the history of his belongings, which may bring back some pleasant associations. I remember once seeing an old oak chair in a saddler's shop in Rugby, and, on asking if he would part with it, I was told he would, together with three more like it. At once I associated with them the pigskin he was working at, and told him to cover the four seats with two fine hides, which I chose myself, and to send them North. On another occasion I was picking up an old arm-chair, and having on a pair of riding breeches, whose fawn-coloured corduroy seemed to match very well the rich dark mahogany woodwork of the shabby old chair, I ordered a piece of the same material from the tailor, and the antique dealer turned me out as pretty an arm-chair as one could wish for.

After choosing some horse clothing once, it struck me that a certain pattern would look well as a rug for my sofa, so I designed a monogram for the corners, and the saddler made me something he had never made before, and its effect was so successful that I got him to make a small cloth of the same pattern, bound with red and yellow, and miniature initials on it, for a smoking table. They have both since been admired over and over again.

Too many photos knocking about a smoking "den" are a mistake; they get dirty, and you cannot have *all* your numerous friends' faces on your mantelpiece. And why should you have one more than another? So make use of albums and photo boxes, and give your relatives, nearest and dearest, the place of honour on your shelf.

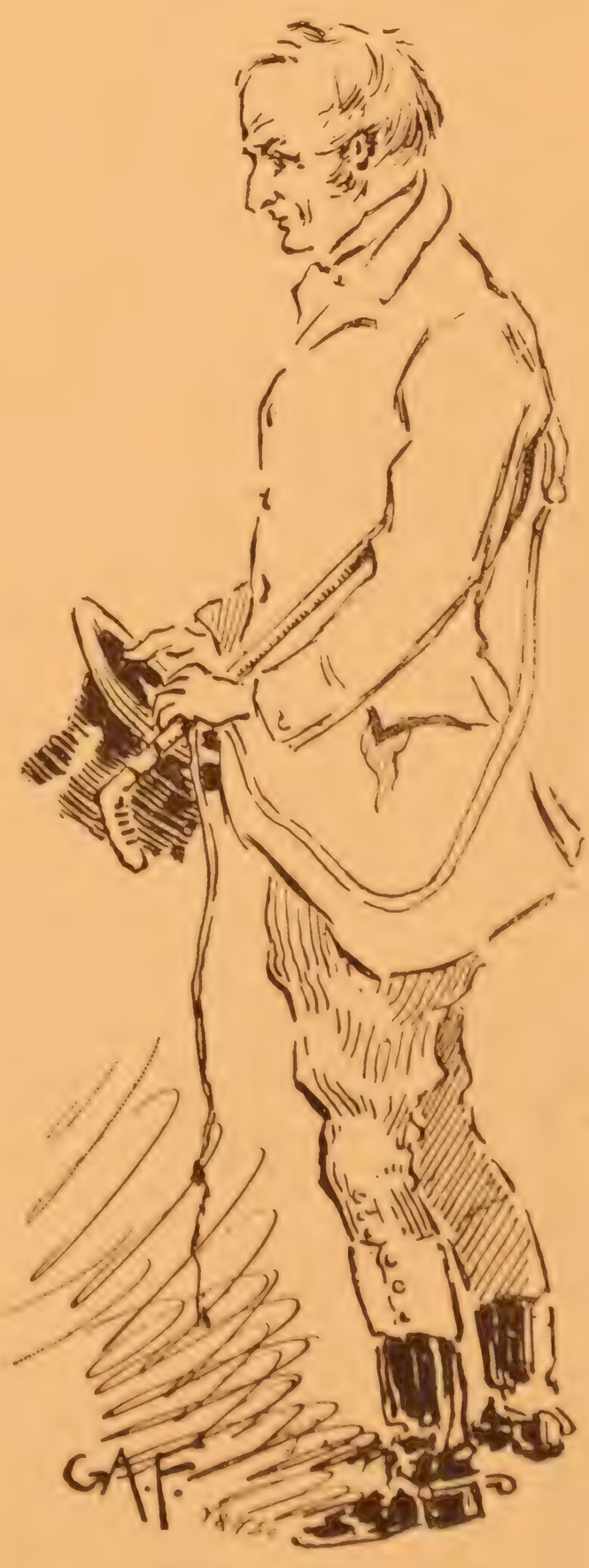
The hoof of a favourite horse that has died serves as a memento in various ways. One aunt of mine had the forelegs of a dear old chesnut horse that was shot taken off below the knee, and these stand now at each side of the fireplace, with a little silver tray for matches inserted into the top of each. Inkstands made out of hoofs are common recollections of old horses, and a saddler will polish up a shoe so as to make a nice letter-weight. A stirrup lends itself to ornamental use for enclosing a small clock. Foxes' brushes make excellent feather brushes, not to mention—five or six together—

an elegant lady's "boa"! A hound's skin here and there is a nice addition to the floor.

All the above are not only ornamental, but each recalls some interesting experience or dear association :—

"There's his hoof upon the chimney,
There's his hide upon the chair ;
A better never bent him to the rein ;
Now, for all my love and care,
I've an empty stall and bare,
I shall never ride my gallant horse again!"

The bookcase should not be passed over. Bookshelves let into a wall look well. The theory must be studied, as well as gaining a practical aspect of hunting, and to a mind at all endowed with a love of books and art, besides the hosts of novels which always will line the shelves of a hunting man's bookcase, let me recommend the Badminton Series as well as the works of Delmé Ratcliffe, Egerton Warburton, and Whyte Melville. Of the last author, especially *Riding Recollectoins ;* and, as far as illustrations are concerned, the old prints of Alken are well worth studying ; so are John Leech's woodcuts and engravings, illustrating *Sponge's Sporting Tour*, *Handley Cross*, and Mr Romford's Hounds ; and, of more modern date, the works of Thomas Blinks, John Charlton, G. D. Giles, and the delightful sketches in *Graphic Pictures*, *Bracebridge Hall*, etc., by Randolph Caldecott, whose "grace and beauty and wealth of imagination" can never be surpassed ; the sympathetic lines of *Punch*, after his lamented death in 1886, well describe him :

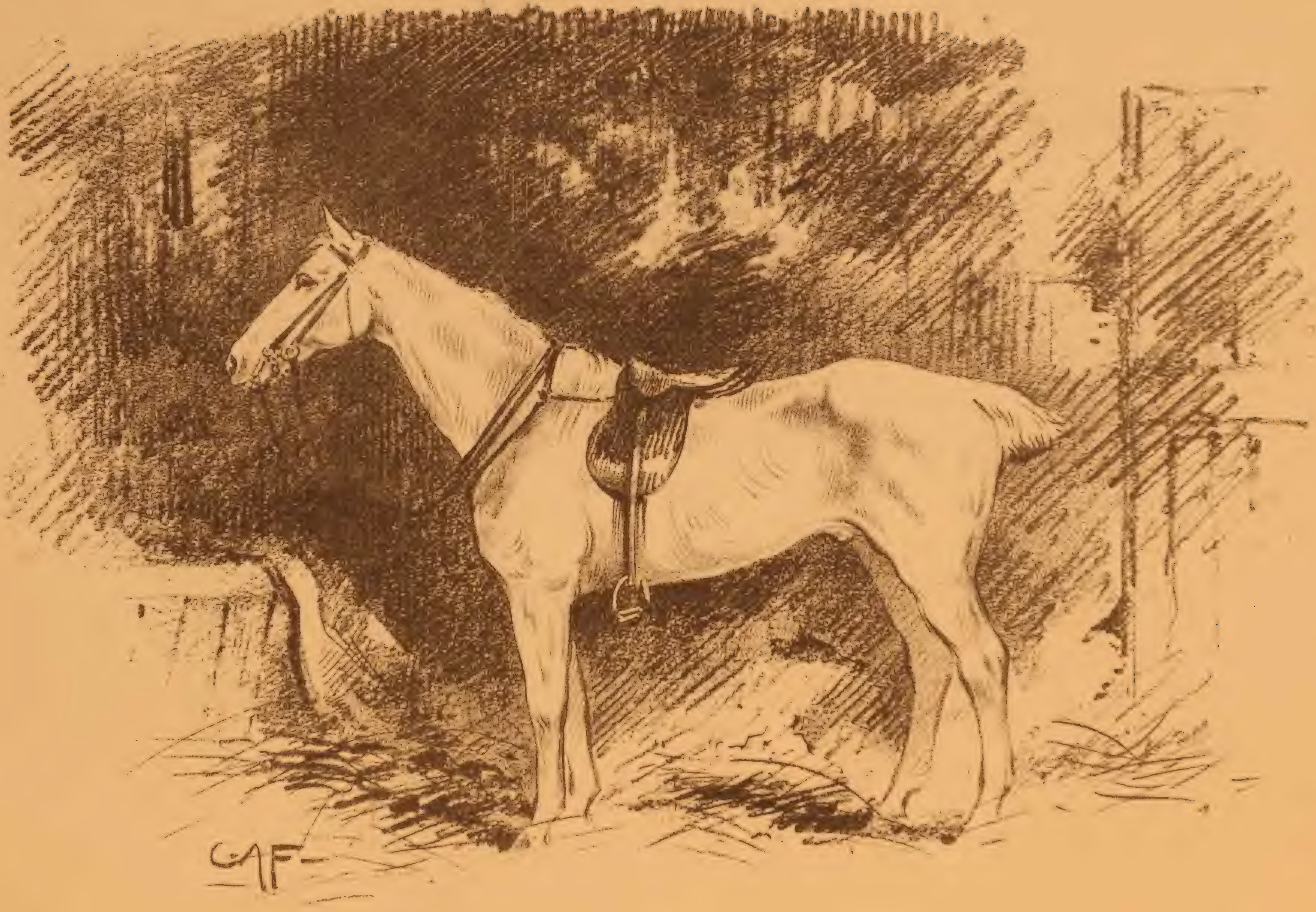


A FOX-HUNTING SQUIRE.

"All that flow of fun, and all
That fount of charm found in his fancy
Are stopped! Yet will he hold us thrall
By his fine art's sweet necromancy,
Children and seniors, many a year;
For long will be ere a new-comer
Fireside or nursery holdeth dear
As him whose life ceased in its summer."

The life of Assheton Smith should be read by every one who intends taking up his quarters in a hunting district, especially if the individual intends to practise as a doctor. This book will enable him to sympathise more fully with the squire in his pursuits—a not unimportant item. Smith was a polished gentleman of the highest order, a much respected landlord; had been one of the best cricketers and boxers of his day; and, as well as a keen yachtsman, was the finest huntsman that ever crossed a saddle—a M. F. H. for fifty years. Hunting districts swell with romance; frankness of disposition and nobility of nature abound in the hunting field as well as "snobbery." A true lover of horseflesh loves his animals, and will spare them on every possible occasion. You will not see him lighting up a cigar and lounging in the saddle during a check after a very fast thing, and the poor beast under him, with legs stretched out, trying to recover his "wind" as best he can, in spite of the fourteen stone above him; but he dismounts, of course, and gives his horse as much rest as possible while the hounds are busy "casting about"; and in this way, amongst others, comes about that mutual sympathy between horse and rider which tells so during a long run.

The last plate in this little book will serve, I trust, as a slight recollection to some of my readers of a dear old horse, whose dignified appearance was so well known to all who hunted with the L. and S. H. during the seasons 1885-93. There are many who will never forget the tremendous applause and renewed cheering of the crowd which the gallant old white horse and his owner, W. J. D., received on their return to the paddock to "weigh in," after winning the red-coat race in a canter at the Oatridge Hunt Meeting, 1890.



"THE DREAM"

Alas! "The Dream" was not fated to carry his master another season after '93. He never properly recovered from his accident during the memorable run from Mosswood to Wallhouse Craigs.

It was only a short time ago that I saw his beautiful hide, and stretched it out at full length on the floor; surely, one could not meet anywhere with a handsomer skin. In his master's room it will remain, a token of many happy days and pleasant rides; and I'll warrant he will often call to mind that poem by Whyte Melville—"The Good Grey Mare"; and when he himself gets grey, with what pleasure will he repeat the lines:—

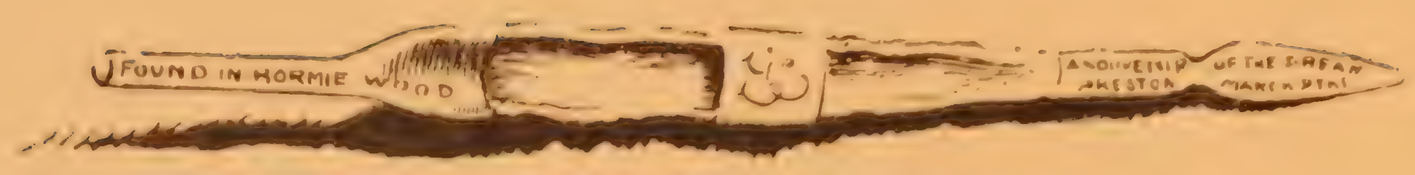
"We are in for a gallop—away! away!
I told them my beauty could fly;
And we'll lead them a dance ere they catch us to-day,
For we mean it, my lass and I!

. . . . . .

"Away! Away! they've been running to kill,
With never a check from the find.
Away! Away! we are close to them still,
And the field are *furlongs* behind!

. . . . . .

"I have lived my life—I am nearly done—
I have played the game all round;
But I freely admit that the best of my fun,
I owe it to horse and hound."



I am inserting, as a brief appendix to these pages, the following extract from an account written by "Croppie Boy," and sent to *Horse and Hound*, 8th December 1888. It is a description of a remarkable jump taken by "The Dream" during a run of two and a half hours in the Linlithgow country. "Croppie Boy" presented the owner of "The Dream" with a souvenir of this run, almost as extraordinary—to an outsider, at any rate—as the jump itself, viz., a toothpick made out of the "funny bone" of the old dog-fox. The extract runs as follows :—

"The Preston Marchdyke, a wall like the side of a house, built with mortar and with square, uncompromising coping stones on top. There is no disgrace in turning from this obstacle, for it is all but utterly unjumpable, so we go round. But the well-known rider of the grey means to have a whet at it, and with three mighty bounds the horse, with sixteen stone on top of him, launched clear over nearly six feet of solid masonry. On the other side is a drop (measured next day) of fourteen feet some odd inches, so, of course, they fall—in fact, the horse's hind legs never touched the ground, but he landed on his fore legs and head and rolled over, sending his rider prospecting, but on the right side of the fence—no mean feat early in the day, before the first gloss is off horse and man, and when the performance is towards the close of a hard day the merit is enhanced, and is, any way, early or late, on a par with the celebrated jump of Squire Tom Smith of Hambledon fame, who, when Master of the (I think) Craven, rode his horse 'General' over a park wall, six feet two inches in height, the rest of the field riding *under* when they got the postern gate open. In both cases the horse fell on landing, but the squire was hurt and our man was not, beyond a shaking, and in both cases the performer was chary of speaking of his deed; but this will be spoken of, and received with incredulity, long after we have been ferried over the unjumpable Styx 'to hunt in pastures Elysian.' Beyond a shaking neither horse nor man are the worse, and are up and with the hounds as they settle down to race by Nether Parkley and Parkley Craigs to Nancy's Hill."